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Book Reviews.

Biblical and Literary Essays. By the late PROFESSOR A. B. DAVIDSON, D.D., LL.D., New College, Edinburgh, edited by his successor, PROFESSOR J. A. PATERSON, D.D. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1903. Pp. 320. \$1.75.

A peculiar interest attaches to this posthumous collection of essays, representing as it does the mind of one of the most profound, cautious, and influential biblical scholars of Christendom. Of the essays, only two, or perhaps three, might be called literary—those on “Mohammed and Islam,” “Arabic Poetry,” and “The Rationale of a Preacher;” the others deal with biblical themes, and almost exclusively with the Old Testament. The various essays illustrate the author’s attitude toward all the most important sections of the Old Testament, except the apocalyptic.

The book abounds in happy characterization, terse and illuminating statement, caustic yet kindly humor, and sharp epigram that pierces swift and keen to the heart of a thing. Often one could wish a more positive expression of opinion with regard to the critical questions of the day; but scattered hints throughout the book, and especially in the last chapter, which was among the last things he wrote, leave no doubt of his general sympathy with the more moderate critical conclusions. On one crucial question he fortunately expresses himself quite decidedly—the question, namely, as to whether there is any essential breach between the pre-prophetic and the prophetic religion. The prophets “are not innovators; they call men back to the old paths” (p. 92); “and the principles of the prophetic age were the fruit of the seed sown in the age of the patriarchs and the time of the exodus” (p. 316). Consistently with this, he maintains that the earliest form of Jehovah-worship did not involve the use of images, and argues that too much stress has been laid upon the silence of Elijah and Amos.

The section on the too little known wisdom books is very suggestive, and there is a useful discussion of the theodicy of Psalms 37, 49, and 73. In the present confusion of the popular mind, resulting from the critical attitude toward the earlier historical books of the Old Testament, Dr. Davidson’s words are penetrating and helpful: “The

body is more than the raiment, and the idea more than the fact" (p. 319).

Perhaps the least satisfactory part of the book will be, to some minds, the chapters on Psalms 2, 72, and 110. The treatment here seems more theological than historical, and one might fairly question the propriety of arguing from so debatable a passage as Ps. 45:6, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." This "very extraordinary designation" of the Messiah simply disappears, if we accept Bruston's brilliant and probable emendation: "Thy throne *shall be* for ever and ever." But it is better to see too much than too little in the great words of Old Testament Scripture; and this book will help us to feel how very interesting and how absolutely unique are the words of God that come through sage and psalmist, prophet and historian. The chapter on Old Testament immortality is a particularly careful and instructive piece of work. A good idea of the variety of the book may be had from the titles of the various chapters: "Biblical Theology," "The Wisdom of the Hebrews," "Hosea," "Amos," "Psalms 2, 72, 110," "The English Bible and Its Revision," "Mohammed and Islam," "Arabic Poetry," "Modern Religion and Old Testament Immortality," "The Rationale of a Preacher," "The Uses of the Old Testament for Edification."

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Rich and Poor in the New Testament: A Study of the Primitive Christian Doctrine of Earthly Possessions. By ORELLO CONE, D.D. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902. Pp. 245. \$1.75.

One may be sure, in taking up the work of President Cone, to find thorough acquaintance with German authorities, and a lucid, if not always profound, exposition of his subject. In the present instance we find no great degree of originality, and perhaps a certain superficiality of treatment; nevertheless, such plain, historical exposition of the utterances of biblical writers on rich and poor is a desirable thing, if only to counteract the disposition to invest modern schemes of social reform with the borrowed authority of Christ and the prophets. President Cone does well to emphasize the fact that the utterances of the prophets and Jewish-Christian writers are simply humanitarian, not sociological; and those of Jesus in particular are colored through and through by his eschatology. Neither the prophets nor the earlier preachers of the gospel aimed at readjustment of the social order.